

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: EMIN, ENRG, GL, DA
SUBJ: NO OIL AROUND GREENLAND

REF: 77 COPENHAGEN 5398

1. ACCORDING TO STORIES IN FEB. 23 POLITIKEN (LEFT OF CENTER) AND BERLINGSKE TIDENDE (INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE), OIL EXPLORATION ACTIVITY OFF THE WEST COAST OF GREENLAND HAS ENDED UNSUCCESSFULLY. BOTH PAPERS REFER TO THE STATEMENTS OF THE GREENLAND MINISTRY'S PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY ERIK HESSELBJERG WHO SAYS THAT HE DOES NOT EXPECT ANY FURTHER DRILLING AROUND GREENLAND IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ALL HOLES DRILLED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS BY THE SIX CONCESSIONAIRES WERE DRY AND NONE OF THEM HAD SOUGHT PERMISSION TO DRILL NEW HOLES THIS SUMMER.

2. TO MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE, SAID HESSELBJERG, IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT HOPES FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF IRON NEAR GODTHAAB COULD NOT BE REALIZED IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS. FURTHERMORE, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS PLENTIFUL
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URANIUM, TECHNOLOGY FOR EXTRACTING IT HAS NOT BEEN DEVELOPED. CONSEQUENTLY, THE BERLINGSKE STORY CONCLUDES, THE HOPE THAT EARNINGS FROM THESE SOURCES MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO HELP SUPPORT A GREENLAND HOME RULE REGIME ARE DOWN THE DRAIN, AT LEAST FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. ARCO'S DENMARK REPRESENTATION RECENTLY TOLD THE CHARGE

THAT HIS COMPANY DID NOT INTEND TO DO ANY FURTHER DRILLING OFF THE GREENLAND COAST. PROSPECTS WERE PRACTICALLY HOPELESS AND, GIVEN THE HIGH COST AND DIFFICULTY OF DRILLING THERE, THE COMPANY INTENDED TO ABANDON THE CONCESSION. THE COMPANY INTENDS TO DEVOTE ITS EFFORTS NOW TO EASING OUT OF ITS CONCESSION OBLIGATIONS FOR FURTHER DRILLING AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE.

4. IN A CONVERSATION ON THE EVE OF PUBLICATION OF THE BERLINGSKE AND POLITIKEN STORIES, HESSELBJERG TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT IN HIS JUDGMENT THE GREATEST PROBLEM FACING THE GREENLANDERS IN ESTABLISHING HOME RULE THERE WAS THE NONVIABLE ECONOMY. WITHOUT OIL AND OTHER SOURCES OF WEALTH, THE GREENLANDERS COULD ONLY LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED DEPENDENCE ON THE DANISH TREASURY. HESSELBJERG THOUGHT THIS DID NOT BODE WELL FOR HOME RULE IN GREENLAND AND THAT TRUE PSYCHOLOGICAL "INDEPENDENCE" WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.
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